



CONGRESSMAN
**A. DONALD
McEACHIN**

Proudly serving Virginia's Fourth
Congressional District



FACT SHEET

WWW.MCEACHIN.HOUSE.GOV

   @REPMcEACHIN

The Military Spouse Employment Act of 2018

Introduced by Representatives A. Donald McEachin (VA-04) and Elise Stefanik (NY-21)

The Military Spouse Employment Act of 2018 aims to help unemployed and underemployed military spouses. Between 12% and 25% of military spouses are unemployed with an additional 25% facing underemployment (meaning they are underpaid or have skills that are underutilized compared to their training). Military families often face financial insecurity due to spousal unemployment, which is an overlooked military readiness issue. *The Military Spouse Employment Act* takes steps to reduce military spouse unemployment and examine the impact that frequent moves and reassignments have on military spouses' careers. This bill will expand hiring and career opportunities, address access to continuing education programs, increase access to affordable childcare, and provide for better transitions and employment resources for military spouses.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Boosts military spouses' competitiveness in the job market**
 - Modifies federal hiring authority so that federal agencies can expedite the hiring of a candidate who is a military spouse. The most desirable jobs near military installations are often federal positions.
 - Requires a plan from the Department of Defense (DoD) to increase the participation of military spouse-friendly businesses in defense contracts.
- **Supports military spouse entrepreneurship**
 - Recognizing that spouses have faced obstacles to starting small businesses on military installations, this legislation encourages the DoD to submit a plan on how to best support military spouses' entrepreneurship on military installations.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **Instructs the DoD to expand educational opportunities for military spouses**
 - Increases awareness of existing career training programs to military spouses and instructs the DoD to evaluate how to expand training options. This includes ensuring existing installation career counselors have the most helpful information for spouses and ensuring spouses are aware of the Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) – which provides scholarships for spouses to pursue associate degrees, certificates, and professional licenses or cover the costs of recertifying credentials after a relocation.

CHILDCARE

- **Increases access to affordable childcare for military families**
 - Given that a lack of access to affordable childcare increases spouse unemployment, this bill instructs the DoD to examine ways to increase the number of cleared childcare providers while ensuring DoD adheres to childcare safety rules.
 - Requires the DoD to assess whether each duty station is allotted the right number of childcare subsidies for the number of families requesting them.

This fact sheet was prepared by the Office of Congressman A. Donald McEachin on February 27, 2018.

COUNSELING AND TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

- **Provides military spouses with training and resources to ease their families' transition to civilian life**
 - Acknowledging that career stability plays a significant role in successful transitions to civilian life, this bill ensures military spouses have access to Military One Source (MOS) resources for a full year.
 - MOS provides services like non-medical mental health counseling, career help and life coaching for veterans and military families after transitioning to civilian life.
 - Requires *Transition Assistance Programs (TAP)* to make space for military spouses to attend classes with their spouse when appropriate, i.e., on financial planning and family readiness (currently only allowed as space is available), and establishes a new spouse-specific TAP program to address transition issues unique to the spouse.

This bill has been endorsed by: The American Legion, Blue Star Families, Military Family Advisory Network, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and National Military Families Association.